



Wohlleber Family Memories

“Marian Remembers Life on the Farm”

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Wohlleber Family Memories

“Marian Remembers Life on the Farm”

Living on the Farm

Marian “ I wish I knew where we lived and when. I know I was born in Leola Township. We lived on the Kozak place, and the Walters place. A tornado took the hen house when we lived at Kozaks.”

(Mom said they rented from Fred Kozak. Fred ran the farm until he moved to South Shore and worked for the county as a road maintainer (must have been when they rented).

Jay Wright (relative of Kozak's) said if Mom rented the farm, then the Stainockers lived to the west. Henry and Lulu lived on the farm to the east.)

“ I was lonely when we moved to the place Johnny and Francis live- seemed like it was so desolate, not as many neighbors as we had at the other place- all I could see was Floyd Gapp's light. It was really hot and humid, too.

Learning to Cook and Clean.

Marian “ I learned how to bake bread when I was 14. In those days, you mixed up a starter dough. Inez usually baked, but one night she stayed in town so I had to learn or waste the dough. Evelyn would come home and help sometimes and milk cows; Rich wasn't too ambitious. I didn't know much about cooking. All that I made was meat and potatoes. We didn't have a garden, but we could buy canned vegetables. I imagine when we had thrashers we'd have vegetables. I remember the summer I came home on leave for three months. I milked a cow, and shocked sweet clover, just to think I had never done that before. Oney and Vi were living with Dad then. Oney bought some Wear Ever pots and pans. We made swiss steak and pies for the thrashers, it was delicious, I will never forget. I think I tried to get into the canning factory, I went with Marian Fiebelkorn; we had lined up where we were going to live. They never called and that was all right. I wanted the summer off anyway”.

Marian “ One time I made fried chicken. I cooked it over the kerosene stove, and then I put it in a glass pan, to finish in the oven. It was hot, some how, when I took it out, I dropped it. The chicken was all over the floor with broken glass, and my brothers were so disgusted that they were not going to have chicken for supper!”

I was 14 when Fred's family came up, and I made chicken. I boiled I first and then I baked it. They took me with them to go visit Uncle Gus.

Marian “I remember making angel food cake. You would start with a cold oven, put in a few sticks of wood to get it warmer. You would use cake flour, and beat it by hand. That made the best angel food”.

Washing Clothes

Marian “I think we always had a Maytag, but Evelyn had to wash clothes without a washing machine when she first got married. She used a stomper to stomp the clothes and get the dirt out. It was like a big plunger, you used that if you didn't have a washing machine. First she rubbed them, then stomped them, then rinsed them, wringed them, and dried them. She had to carry in the water and carry out water. Lye was put in the water, she had to soften it by heating it on the stove. Her clothes were as white as could be.”





Wohlleber Family Memories

Straw Burners

Mom “ We burned straw in a straw burner, I can remember I burned my hand, I saw other people poking around, so I did and the flames came out and burned my fingers. I was probably about six.”

Norm “ The straw burner was a 55 gallon barrel, it had two handles welded on the sides so two men could carry it. You had to stomp the flax straw into it, the tighter the better. We would use a great big sledge hammer to get it down in there. It would almost last a night. When it ran out, you unhooked it and took it out to the inside of the old lean-to on the granary to where it was nice and dry, and we would stomp in some more. You always had two in case they burned out. Ole Barland was the blacksmith at Summit, they would make good money fixing up the barrels so they would burn.

There were two vents, you had to poke it so it would burn evenly, sometimes there would be straw at the top or the bottom that you had to poke into the fire. When you pulled the straw down, and sparks would fly, and that is how Marian burned her hand. At times the grain dust would cause it to puff, sometimes it could blow the lid off! The straw burners were dangerous, but they were the only way you could survive.

Thrashing Time

Marian “During thrashing time we would pull down the shades and open the doors, and get towels or tree limbs to shew the flies out of the house, before the crew would come in to eat”.

Marian “We didn’t trust the hired hands. One time Inez and Evelyn borrowed some dishes, they went to Marcella’s [Rusch] to return them and never came back, we thought they had been kidnapped by hired hands, but they were there visiting and eating”.

Thrashing runs- Donnie was on it- George Wohlleber started it, Dad was about 13 or 14. Seven or eight neighbors would meet ahead of time and decide who got it first, they would thresh two days at each house, and then come back for 2 more days and repeat until it was all cleaned up.

“Bliss, Uncle Ray, George Leinen, Uncle Ray and Ed Fransen, Uncle Chris and George would be in on the thrashing”. George W would do a couple of runs down on the flats before coming to the hills- better money. They threshed by the bushel and there was more yield in the flats. Walt Bard was the threshing crew before that, for many years”.

Living in Milbank

Marian “When I was about twelve, we lived in town (Milbank). We lived at 212 Main for about three weeks, and I went to school; those are some of my happiest memories. Lillie and Inez were living with us and helping with the rent. I sat with Betty Lowe and Amer, I think they were going together even then. I started being friends with Gail Greise, the daughter of someone who managed the St Hubert’s. It was nice to feel accepted by the people who ran the hotel. But when I told Dad that I needed money for tennis shoes, we packed up and moved back to the farm Lillie and Inez were laid off, so we didn’t have that extra income, and it was expensive living in town. Besides, I think Dad wanted to get back to the farm; John, Elmer and Oney stayed on the farm. If there would have been buses, then a person could have gone to school more easily. We went back right before Christmas. Besides, I needed to be home to make supper.

When I came back, Olga Olson, my teacher, me a big hug-. I welcomed her hug but I really wanted to stay in Milbank. I was in 7th grade. She was a wonderful Christian teacher. Dad and I both had her. Bev Carpenter did home care for all her sisters, the publisher of the paper in Milbank is also related to her.





Wohlleber Family Memories

Driving

Marian “I used to drive when I was younger- I never got my license. One time I was trying to help Evelyn start the car. We tried to push the car up the hill- it was hot, and I passed out and fell under the car. She got mad at me and told me to get up!”

One time Vi and Mom were on their way to pick up Evelyn to babysit. They were driving Oney’s 46 Hudson. A car full of kids pulled out from a side road and Vi swerved to miss them and they hit some loose gravel and lost control of the car. The car went from one ditch to the other. Mom panicked and thought she would help by stepping on the brake, but she stepped on the gas instead. When they got back to Oneys he saw the grass that was caught in the doors and asked what happened. Mom said “Just be glad we weren’t killed!” But they still made it to the dance that night.

Mom said they only had one car, and the boys used it, so they could not teach her how to drive. She did drive as she got older, she said she can remember driving past Johnny’s house felt like 60 miles/hr going down that hill. She never had a license. Dad never had a license either-when he went into the Western Union he had to have one, and ended up getting a chauffeurs license in Indiana and Illinois.

Dad said women didn’t really drive by themselves back in those days.

Birthday Party

Marian “I always felt close to the Meyers, Berdina and Clayton. When I was 18, they had a joint birthday party for me and Johnny Kropinski, Clayton Meyer’s brother-in law. It was just after Alfred was killed, but we decided to have it anyway. They had a house party, held in the granary, kind of a barn dance. It was nice to be honored. That was very important to me, that’s the way the Meyer’s family was. Clayton married my friend Berdina Bunde, from Germantown. She died now and he passed away as well, he was in a nursing home in Rapid City”.

Permanents

Permanent waves \$1.00 at the Powder Box- advertisement in *Summit Independent in 1936*. Mom got her first perm when she was in 8th grade (1936).

Holidays:

Marian: “We never had a Christmas tree when I was growing up. They had real candles on the Christmas tree at church, but could only have them lit for a short time, someone at church always had to watch it”.

WPA

Marian “Dad put his WPA check in the ash pan, at the bottom of the cook stove, to keep it safe and he accidentally burned it up. We got the money back, but in those days \$30.00 was a lot of money”.

” The WPA paid people to sew relief clothes in Milbank. Lilly worked there, she came and stayed with us when we lived in town. People on relief could get their clothes there, but that didn’t mean there was a lot. Inez worked there too. I think Inez got laid off because they found out she was too young.”





Wohlleber Family Memories

Early Religion:

Mom "Allison's and Mauriece were our neighbors, both families were Christian mentors to me- they helped plant the seeds of my faith . We weren't going to Mazeppa like we should have, then. I remember Mauriece wanted me to go up front and I didn't want to. I always felt so comfortable at Mauriece's house. Johnny had a crush on Mauriece when we were younger. He was singing " The object of my affection.....out in the corn field, and he got teased about her. Teddy Allison married a Dorset girl. Jimmy Allison was a mailman".

Norm : They had a brother Willie, and Artie. Artie was short guy, about 4 foot eight. He would get in the bag when they were sheering sheep, and pack in the wool. Wool was real oily, you could get a lot in a sack. When they got the bag full, he would be on top. One time, he got stuck in the bottom of the bag, they found the him wiggling in the bottom of the bag".

Marian " Their home must have been one of the prettiest ones around. My first grade teacher was Ted Allison . Margaret and Pearl, who was also a teacher, were very religious. Pearl taught Bible Class in the summer. I had Ted for a teacher when we lived on the Wolter's place- I must have been six years old. "

Mom remembers visiting Kreisels to get some seed corn, the minister was there, they had not gone to church for awhile. He talked to Grandpa and that got things started for confirmation. She was 15 and Oney was 17. Mom said she hardly went to Sunday School that she can remember. Grandpa always felt it was more important for the kids to go.

Inez wanted to get confirmed when they did, but they told her to go to Watertown because she was working there. Mom said confirmation was about 6 weeks in the summertime. They "had to go read for the preacher". Oney could drive then, she was not sure if confirmation was everyday, or just Saturdays. Oney bought Mom her hymnal for confirmation. " It was nice to get confirmed with Lester and Irene Adolphsen."

Neighbors "Upruds lived north of Oney's at one time- they moved around alot. I stayed with them one time, and they sent us lunches made with mutton and big apples that they got as relief food. I'm sure they had fresh baked bread, I remember I thought those sandwiches were so good, and I have never seen such big apples".

Friends and family in Mazeppa and Rauville

Irene Adolphson worked and stayed with Herman Halverson through high school.

Bill Adolphsen was the blacksmith in South Shore.

Mom remembers Oscar Adolphsen had a house party in the winter, they had a crank-up record player and we went over there tucked under a blanket that had an warm iron in it for heat. If a horse died they took the hide and skinned it. If you covered the blanket on top of the warm iron it would really hold in the heat.

Mom can remember how the horses could barely get through the snow.

Harry Brietzman, went to the Rauville church. He played the accordian, was in several bands in Watertown and he played for dances. Oscar Warness was also a well know accordian player in the area.

Darla Quitch's mother worked at the Jake Carlson Store

Mom dated a Tulewetzke- he was a couple heads shorter than I was. I think he had a model A with a rumble seat- Elmer stayed in the rumble seat.





Wohlleber Family Memories

Camp

“One summer, I went to 4 H camp at Hartford Beach. It cost \$3.00 to go. Hazel Southwick was there and a couple other girls from Stockholm. Ken Holmes wife, Alva, was a teacher, she was the leader. We were there for three days. We had to sell some chickens so she would have money to go”.-Iva went, too, but not the same time. When she came back she knew how to tap dance!

Work

“Marian F and I had planned on getting a job canning corn-we were looking for rooms in Milbank, but they never got called to work. I was on a leave of absence from the laundry”.

Songs

Mom I remember this old song- it's by Rudy Vallée in the late 1930's

Vieni, vieni, vieni, vieni, vieni

Tu sei bella, bella, bella, bella, bella

Bella waiting for you

Vieni, vieni, vieni, vieni, vieni

Tu sei bella, bella, bella, bella, bella

Lonesome and blue;

Palm trees are gently swaying

My heart is say how much I love you

Ah, moonlight is softly gleaming

My heart is dreaming of you

Other Songs

Playmate

Stumbling - Paul Whiteman

Whispering While You Cuddle Near Me Paul Whiteman

Drinking Rum and Cocoa-cola

"Give me a date and a ford V8 with a rumble seat for 2 and let me wahoo, wahoo, wahoo"- old depression song.

